

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 26, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 49: PERCENTAGE OF THE WORKFORCE  
PARTICIPATING IN THE WELLNESS PROGRAM AND THE PROGRAM'S  
IMPACT ON HEALTH INSURANCE CLAIMS

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This memo is in response to a request from Mayor Euille that the City Council be provided information on the percentage of the workforce participating in the Wellness Program and the program's impact on health insurance claims. In FY 2002, staff from the Personnel Services Department (now Human Resources) conducted research into medical claims from the City's two health care providers and found that some of the medical conditions listed in the claims are amenable to wellness and prevention efforts. Based on this initial research a Wellness survey of employees was conducted in FY 2004 under the direction of the City's Wellness Committee. In response to survey data that indicated employees had an interest in participating in health and exercise programs, the Wellness Committee developed a wellness initiative that comprised several components. Below is a list of Wellness programs and activities offered to employees since FY 2008:

- Weight-Watchers At-Work
- "Working Well" – monthly lunchtime seminars through Kaiser Permanente
- Free Use of City Recreation Facilities by City Employees
- Annual Health Fair
- Corporate Membership Discount Program at the Alexandria YMCA
- Yoga-at-Lunch

In FY 2008, 1,077 employees participated in some fashion in the Wellness Program (some employees may be doubled counted.) The table below provides a listing of each component of the Wellness Program and total number of employees who utilized each program or activity. The percent of employees participating in the Wellness Program compared to the total number of City employees is also provided. Participation data for FY 2009 is not currently available, but it is being tracked by Human Resources.

<b>Wellness Program Component</b>	<b>Employee Utilization in FY 2008</b>	<b>% of Employees Participating to Total Workforce*</b>
Weight Watchers At Work	196	7.5%
"Working Well" Lecture Program	100	3.8%
Free Use of City Recreation Centers	64	2.5%
Annual Health Fair	600	23.0%
YMCA Discount Program	10	0.4%
Yoga-at-lunch	107	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1077</b>	

Total City workforce in FY 2008 was 2,606. This includes FT and PT General Salary employees and FT public safety employees. Source: FY 2009 Approved Budget.

Research conducted in FY 2002 by staff did identify health conditions within employee health insurance claims that could respond positively to Wellness and prevention efforts either before or after diagnosis. However, the extent to which the Wellness Program impacts the City's health insurance claims is not available. In order to be able to quantify the City's return on its Wellness investment, the Wellness Program would need to be further evaluated and redesigned. One additional issue to consider is how health care claims for employees' dependents impact the City's health care costs. The City Wellness programs are not geared directly for employees' dependents, so this becomes an issue when trying to determine the impact of the wellness program on overall health care costs.

In FY 2010, the Human Resources Department will reevaluate the City's Wellness Program in order to create a closer bond between the need for improving employees' health and wellness and decreasing the City's overall healthcare expenses. This effort will require Human Resources to dedicate staff and resources towards analyzing health care claims and working with the City's healthcare providers to ensure that the City wellness program remains current with prevailing wellness practices.